Margt Holmes

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Selections.

CAN COLORED MEN BE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES?

OPINION OF THE U. S. ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

To Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury.

Your letter states that "A. Bontemps, who schooners Elizabeth and Margaret, of New Brunswick, is detained by the revenue cutter Tiger, at Cape May, New Jersey, because commanded by a 'colored man,' and so by a person not a citizen of the United States. As colored masters are numerous in our coasting trade, I submit for opinion the question suggested by Capt. Marvin of the Tiger: Are colored men citizens of the United States, and therefore competent to command American vessels?"

The question would have been more clearly stated if, instead of saying are colored men citizens, it had been said, can colored persons be citizens of the United States; for within our borders and upon our ships, both of war and commerce, there may be colored men, and white men also, who are not citizens of the United States. In treating the subject I shall endeavor to answer your question as if it inquired only this: Is a man legally incapacitated to be a citizen of the United States by the sole fact that he is a colored man not a white man?

* * * * * * *

In my opinion the Constitution uses the word citizen only to express the political quality of the individual in his relations to the government; to declare that he is a member of the body politic, and bound to it by the reciprocal obligation of allegiance on the one side and protection on the other. And I have no knowledge of any other kind of political citizenship, higher or lower, attained or acquired, than that in the sense in which the word has been used in the Constitution, or can be used properly in the laws of the United States. The phrase, "a citizen of the United States," without addition or qualification, means neither more nor less than a member of the nation. And all such are politically and legally equal—the child in the cradle and its father in the Senate are equally citizens of the United States. And it needs no argument to prove that every citizen of a State is necessarily a citizen of the United States; and to me it is equally clear that every citizen of the United States is a citizen of the particular State in which he is domiciled.

And as to voting and holding office as that privilege is not essential to citizenship, so the deprivation of it by law is not a deprivation of citizenship. No more so in the case of a negro than to the case of a white woman or child.

* * * * * * *

And in this connection the Constitution says not one word, and furnishes not one hint, in relation to the color or to the race of citizens "born citizens." Whatever may have been said in the opinions of judges and lawyers in the various courts, about negroes, mulattoes and persons of color, the Constitution is wholly silent upon that subject. The Constitution itself does not make the citizens (it is in fact, made by them). It only intends and recognizes such of them as are natural—home-born—and provides for the naturalization of such of them as were alien—foreign-born—making the latter, as far as nature will allow, like the former.

* * * * * * *

As far as I know, Mr. Secretary, you and I have no better title to the citizenship which we enjoy than "the accident of birth"—the fact that we happened to be born in the United States. And our Constitution, in speaking of natural born citizens, uses no affirmative language to make them such, but only recognizes and reaffirms the universal principle, common to all nations, and so old as political society, that the people born in a country do constitute the nation, and, as individuals, are natural members of the body politic.

If this be a true principle, and I do not doubt it, it follows that every person born in the country is, at the moment of birth, *prima facie* a citizen; and he who would deny it must take upon himself the burden of proving some great disfranchisement or alienage enough to override the "natural born" right as recognized by the Constitution in terms the most simple and comprehensive, and without any reference to race or color, or any other accidental circumstance.

* * * * * * *

I have said that, *prima facie*, every person born in a country is born a citizen; and that he who denies it in individual cases assumes the burden of stating the exception to the general rule, and proving the fact which works the disfranchisement. There are but few exceptions commonly made and urged as disqualifying facts. I by no means upon the ground of admitted class of the natural-born composed of the children of foreign ministers and the like, and,

1. *Slavery*, and whether or not slavery be possible for a citizen to be a citizen. On that point I make no question, because it is not within the scope of your inquiry, and does not concern the person to whom your inquiry relates.

2. *Color.*—It is strenuously insisted by some that "persons of color," though born in the country, are not capable of being citizens of the United States. As far as the Constitution is concerned, this is a naked assumption; for the Constitution contains not one word upon the subject. On that point it is silent, and thus rest upon some fundamental fact which, in the reason and nature of things, is so inconsistent with citizenship, that the law must of course rest in the same person. Is mere color such a fact? Let those who assert it prove that it is so. I have never been so subjected to the actual practice in the nation from which we derive our language, laws and institutions, and our very morals and modes of thought; and, as far as I know, there is not a single nation in Christendom which does not regard the *non-*found idea with incredulity and disgust. What can there be in the color of a man's skin (we are speaking now not of race, but of color only) to disqualify him for bearing true and faithful allegiance to his native country? And these two allegiance and protection, constitute the sum of the duties and rights of a "natural-born citizen of the United States."

3. *Race.*—There are some who, abandoning the untenable objection of color, still contend that no person descended of African race can be a citizen, or can be a citizen of the United States. Here the objection is not to color, but race only. The indivdual object to may be of very long descent from African negroes, and may be as white as leprosy, or as the fair-maidenhood of many generations with the Caucasian race can make him; still, if he can be traced back to negroes of the African race, he cannot, they say, be a citizen of the United States! And why not? The Constitution certainly does not forbid it, but is silent about race as it is about color.

Our nationality was created and our political government exists by written law, and inasmuch as that law does not exclude persons of that descent, and as its terms are manifestly broad enough to include them, it follows inevitably that such persons, born in the country, must be citizens, unless the fact of African descent be so incompatible with the fact of citizenship that the two cannot exist together. If they can coexist, in nature and reason, then they do coexist in persons of the indicated class, for there is no law to the contrary. I am not able to perceive any antagonism, legal or natural, between the two facts.

But it is said that African negroes are a degraded race, and that all who are tainted with the degradation and brand are disqualified for the functions of citizenship. I can hardly comprehend the thought of the absolute incompatibility of degradation and citizenship. I thought that they often went together. But it it be true with regard to races, it seems to me more cogently true with regard to individuals. And if I be right in this, there are many anti-social examples in the legislation and practice of nations, showing the distinction between political and civil rights, which, I believe, is common to most nations. The French code expresses it very plainly, thus: "L'exercice des droits civils n'est independant de la qualite de citoyen, laquelle ne s'acquiert et ne se conserve que conformement a la loi constitutionnelle."

The next inquiry I shall consider is a decision of the Department of State made in Mr. Marcy's time, Nov. 4, 1856, and evidenced by a letter of that date from Mr. Thomas, assistant secretary, to Mr. Rice, of New York. That decision is entitled to great consideration, because upon such political questions the Secretary of State is of high rank. The case was upon application for passports to travel in foreign parts, in favor of certain free blacks of some of the States, and refused. That was a few months after the passage of the act of August 18, 1856 (the first act directing the issuing of passports to individuals and restricting the issue to citizens of the United States, though the practice is much older).

The letter, after stating the case, declares emphatically that "in his opinion" (i. e. of the Secretary), that these can be no doubt that they are not citizens of the United States." If this stood alone there could be no doubt of the opinion of the Department of that time. But it does not stand alone. The letter, after citing several authorities, and among them one from Tennessee, to which I will have occasion to refer by name, concludes with this qualifying paragraph, which leaves some doubt as to what was the real ground relied upon: "Without the express declaration of the Constitution it is regarded as a well established principle of law that every person born within the limits of the United States, and not within the exceptions of the first clause of the first section of the fourteenth amendment of the Constitution, is a citizen, no matter what may be the political condition of his parents. Free persons of color in this country may, in some of the States, be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens, and in other States not to be entitled to any of them. The political franchise of voting, or of holding office, does not depend upon color, but upon citizenship. Wherever, therefore, the free man of color resides in a State where he enjoys the privileges of a citizen, he is entitled to a passport, and is not to be denied it because he may not be entitled to the privileges and immunities of citizens in other States."

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National Anti-Slavery Standard.

WITHOUT CONCEALMENT—WITHOUT COMPROMISE.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1863.

The Proclamation of Emancipation.

By the President of the United States of America.
A Proclamation.

WHEREAS, on the 22d day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong counter-vailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit: Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, Saint Mary, Saint Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are and hence shall be free! and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby repeat upon the people so declared to be free, to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that in all cases, when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And, upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my name and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By the President:
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

STATISTICS OF THE PROCLAMATION.

Proportion of Slaves Freed and Left in Bondage.

Slaves absolutely freed in Eight Rebel States.

Alabama	435,080	North Carolina	331,059
Arkansas	111,115	South Carolina	402,406
Florida	61,745	Texas	182,566
Georgia	462,198		
Mississippi	436,631	Total	3,429,360

Slaves freed in parts of States in rebellion.

Louisiana—Thirty-six parishes	104,949
Virginia—Forty-seven counties	436,632
Total	491,472

Slaves in parts of States excepted by the Proclamation.

Louisiana—Thirteen parishes, including New Orleans	85,290
Virginia—Forty-six counties, including the forty-eight of Western Virginia	39,228
Total	124,518

Slaves in Border States wholly excepted.

Delaware	1,798
Kentucky	225,483
Maryland	87,189
Missouri	114,965
Tennessee	275,784
	275,784
	905,179

Recapitulation.

1. Slaves absolutely freed in eight rebel States		3,429,360
2. Slaves absolutely freed in parts of two States	491,472	
Total number of slaves declared free		4,020,832
3. Slaves excepted in the proclamation in parts of Louisiana and Virginia	124,518	
4. Slaves excepted in the Border States	905,179	
Total number of slaves not freed by the proclamation		1,029,697
5. Whole number of slaves in the United States, by census of 1860		5,050,529
6. Whole number remaining slaves January 1, 1863		1,030,238
Number freed		4,020,291

THE HAPPY NEW YEAR.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR, indeed, is that which has just begun its course around the earth! The happiest for this country, and for the world as well, if it do but fulfil the promise of its first day! The Abolitionists of America may well thank God and take courage in view of the Proclamation of the President, and of the state of things from which it proceeded, and of the state of things which it foretells. Not that their work is done, nor that the end is come. But the crown of success that must finally reward their work in fast taking its glorious shape, and if the God be for them, as surely he is, who can be effectually against them? Well instantly, perhaps, nor soon, as our eagerness counts speed, but soon as speed is reckoned in the great distribute of the worldly history. Not that the Proclamation in all that we could have wished it to have been, or all that we think it might and should have been; but we accept it as more than we had dared to expect or even to hope. If put in force in good faith and with a resolute purpose, it is sufficient for the deliverance of the land; and if not so to be enforced, the best we could have desired, had we had our absolute will in its framing, would have been no more effectual. But we believe in the good faith of the government, all the more, perhaps, from the very reluctance it has shown as to taking this last best step, and we have confidence that it will have the wisdom that is profitable to direct the execution of his policy given to it.

We have believed from the beginning of this Civil War that it would effect the Abolition of Slavery sooner or later. But we had thought it would be later than we could wish, and but it may be sooner than we could dare to hope. The progress of events has been so gradual, though certainly not slow, that the mind has grown accustomed to their strangeness and finds it hard to feel in its full extent how marvellous the change has been which they have worked. A little more than two years ago, it seemed as if all the powers, political and moral, in this country, were leagued together for the everlasting establishment of slavery. Democracy was rampant, and Republicanism was timid and slow of perception and in action. Just two years ago, in Boston, on Sunday after Sunday, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, WENDELL PHILLIPS had to be escorted by armed men, to save his life from a murderous mob, as he went to and from a religious service in the Music Hall of that city. Less than two years ago, the meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society was broken up in Boston by an organized mob, the Mayor of the city refusing, and the Governor of the State not deeming himself authorized to protect it. Everywhere over the Free States anti-slavery meetings were mobbed, evidently by concert and organization proceeding from some central body. Everywhere, with the honorable exception of this city, where the Metropolitan Police proved the possibility of good government, where riot and murder had been looked upon as the normal condition of the greatest city in the Union. Had the slaveholders only been content with a very little less than everything, and consented to the choice of a Democratic President selected by the majority of the free States, there is scarcely any sacrifice of our civil liberties which they might not have counted. But the pride that goeth before a fall bewrayed them, and God having ordained their destruction, as slaveholders, first made them mad. And their destruction is now sure, and will be speedy, as God counts speed, even with every delay that our crime or folly may incur.

To be sure, the destruction of slavery was appointed from the beginning, as is that of every institution or device of man resting on the violation of the organic laws of the universe. But its end has been hastened by many years by the blind insanity of its idolaters.

What prophet would have been believed who foretold, at the opening of the war, that in less than two years the President of the United States would declare all the slaves in ten States, with certain exceptions in parts of two, forever free, and that the nation? The lunatic hospital would have been declared by the great mass of the people the only place fit for such a madman. And yet here we have the actual thing, even if it come to pass, after a few little months! We regret that the President should have excepted from the operation of his Evangel of Freedom almost all the rebel territory of which we have actual possession, and limited its blessed effect to those portions thereof that are beyond our power, at present. New Orleans and the excepted parishes of Louisiana and a large part of Tennessee are notoriously swarming with rebels, scarcely held in check by the armed hand. It would have been a wise and just beginning of the good work to free all the slaves within the command of our guns, leaving the rare loyalists the benefit of compensation. It would have been a meritoil punishment to the rebellious slaveholders and an earnest of good faith to the slaves in the regions yet out of our reach. But we thank the President for what he has done, and especially for not having excepted the Southern portion of North Carolina from the sweep of his beneficent declaration.

For the first time since the war began, the United States are in a logical position. Their conclusions are no longer at war with their premises. The enemy of the enemy is the friend of the United States, has manifested any special favor towards our arms can now be met, we may hope, with a more satisfactory answer than that we have had to content ourselves with—that there was no reason why he should, as long as we were trying to put down the rebellion and save the Union, employ our military barraters for the rebels. God, himself, cannot help one to build a city, who pulls down with one hand what he builds up with the other. The mutual labor which produces food and wealth is the corner-stone on which States rest. We have now laid our hands upon the block-headed head of the corner-stone of Southern polity, and if we utterly remove or even permanently displace it, that polity must come down. It must come down, but not as a ram and a desolation, but as a necessary condition of a rectification by the line and plummet of eternal justice and everlasting right.

How this plan of the Proclamation will be carried out we cannot precisely predict. If it be inspired with honesty of purpose and committed to honest and able hands, we believe that it will execute itself, just as fast and as far as it has opportunity given it to work in. The heart of the cotton country can be reached by bayonet points, and as our gunboats pierce into those recesses, the slaves will come flocking to the shadow of the Stars and Stripes, now the emblem unto them of life and of liberty, instead of death unto them, as the rebel-boding cross has been to all who have served, as they will be if the President be obeyed, the heart of slavery will be dead within it. The excitement which the news of this deliverance at hand will cause, will spread into the remotest corners of the slave country, and will carry with it a fearful looking-for of calamity at hand. This excitement which the news of this deliverance at hand will cause, will spread into the remotest corners of the slave country, and will carry with it a fearful looking-for of calamity at hand. This excitement that nineteen slaves have been hanged in Charleston, for conveying arms to convenient hiding-places, in coffins, by means of pretended funerals, prophetic of real funerals to the conscience-stricken masters! The servile mind is eminently superstitious, and will be yet more effectually shifted from its old turning-point by the knowledge of the proclamation and whatever unrumors will be taken under it. The system of labor on which the rebellion rests will be thoroughly disorganized, only to be restored to activity by a healthful and normal reorganization. That slavery can be abolished, under the proclamation, in all regions approachable by our navy, is now a proved fact. Let it be destroyed in the Gulf States, and it will die a natural death in the Border States, which are merely its breeding-places. Slavery is one of those falsities which exist only so long as it is unquestioned and undisturbed. It has been doomed from the beginning. Its fate has been hastened by the Anti-Slavery Agitation of the last thirty years, which has made it the one object of thought and discussion. It has been condemned to death by the President, compelled by the manners of its worshippers. We trust, and believe, that no respite or reprieve will seek to save it from the doom appointed to it from the beginning of the world.

GLAD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

WE have at last, thanks be to God, reached the true beginning of the end. We have doubled the Cape at Good Hope. We have passed the Rubicon. The decisive act has been accomplished which makes it impossible, humanly speaking, that our country should ever be what it has been.

For as our political relation to slavery is from being the noble, the just, the beneficent one that we could wish—great as are the labors, obstacles, discouragements, that we have yet to encounter—there is neither of legitimate and lawful power existing in the great step just taken by the President, and in the new prospect it opens before us.

When Gurth, the born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, was enfranchised by his master, he recalled out—"Gurth is free, by Saint Dunstan! he may be outlaw from the rank of a freeman." It will take some time yet to file off our chains. But the decree has gone forth; the power of the oppressor is broken. For whatever number of years or months of slavery may remain in our land, from that time forward freedom is the rule and bondage the exception. Freedom must steadily increase till it becomes supreme and universal; bondage must shrink and diminish till it disappears forever.

By one act of executive authority, three million of slaves are immediately made free men. They are instantaneously transformed from chattels into citizens. They are invited to enlist in the armies of the Republic. Say, more. The very ground assigned by the President for their advancement on the political scale is the grade of defenders of their country in the express and distinct recognition of their right and power to be to the safety of that country. There is also position and justice in this fact, that three millions of people, lately described by the President as mere cumberers of the ground, an objectionable element in the country's population, are to prove that no mistake was made in their being declared a public benefit, are now urged, by the same functionary, to help him and his proud Caucasians, against an enemy else invincible. The encompassing Proclamation is himself on a level with the great rebellion that it vows to be abolished. Its objections unfinally destructive of each other. In one breath they say, it is a brutum fulmen, an empty threat; in the next they say, it is a direful incitement to insurrection, to rapine and murder. It is vile and worthless, because not one slave in a thousand will ever hear of it, say they; and they immediately proceed to declare it fiendish and horrible because, as soon as it is issued, every slave will call his master's throat. To objections like these we may safely leave the task of neutralizing each other.

To the quieter and more specious statement that the Proclamation can actually benefit only those slaves who have the good luck to come within our lines, it may be worth while to say that it will not only spread a rich immense rapidly over every portion of the South, but that it will exercise everywhere a moral influence mightily effective for the freedom, and against the slaveholder.

The best foreign observers in this country have noticed that Americans as a powerfully impressed with the equality of law, that they cherish more devotion of any statute, even a bad one, and that they will fight better in a minority which includes the constitution than in a majority of ten to one against him. The great strength of slavery in this country has arisen from a belief that the law and the constitution were on its side. This belief has been greatly aided by the fact that legislative, judicial and executive functionaries have generally, in our past history, aided the slaveholder and turned their influence against the slave.

Now, Heaven be praised, things are changed. The government has turned against slavery, as far as the rebel States are concerned. He who supports or labors against slavery there is no longer "a law-abiding man." He who helps the slave there, against the pretended ownership of any master whatever, is in sympathy and cooperation with the President of the United States, and with the army and navy now doing his bidding in the South. The slave now, for the first time, has the lower as well as the higher law on his side. His arm will be nerved with our tiger now that the President's official act has authorized him to use it "in every self-defence"; and, over and above that still, instead of assuming every while man to be at course his enemy, he can now call for help, in the name of the law, upon any one who chances to witness the assault of that worst of highway robbers who seizes a fellow-man as his property. The Proclamation, wherever it goes, doubles the manhood of every man who has been ranked a slave.

Of course, for the same reason, the Proclamation annihilates on much strength and confidence as the slaveholder formerly derived from the reflection that the Government, with its prestige and its power, was on his side. He who now claims a slave, in any part of the region in question, is performing an unlawful act, and can no longer, on the strength of Southern policy, and if we utterly remove or even permanently displace it, that polity must come down. It must come down, but not as a ram and a desolation, but as a necessary condition of a rectification by the line and plummet of eternal justice and everlasting right.

How this plan of the Proclamation will be carried out we cannot precisely predict. If it be inspired with honesty of purpose and committed to honest and able hands, we believe that it will execute itself, just as fast and as far as it has opportunity given it to work in. The heart of the cotton country can be reached by bayonet points, and as our gunboats pierce into those recesses, the slaves will come flocking to the shadow of the Stars and Stripes, now the emblem unto them of life and of liberty, instead of death unto them, as the rebel-boding cross has been to all who have served, as they will be if the President be obeyed, the heart of slavery will be dead within it. The

a Boston paper, in response to which the Washington *Republican* says:

"A Boston newspaper, an organ of the clique in that city, which is held together by the cohesive power of hatred to better men than themselves, and which is specially embittered by its recent overthrow before the people of Massachusetts upon the direct and distinct issue of the reelection of Mr. Sumner as Senator of the United States, vents its own spite and the spite of the defeated politicians whom it represents, by the sneering remark, that the appointment of Mr. Seward gratified gentlemen at the succession of Gov. Seward in the Cabinet, '*failed to draw out a favoring response*' anywhere."

"It is quite certain that this suggestion of Mr. Sumner's name in connection with the presidency, did not come from his personal friends, who would unanimously oppose his leaving the Senate, whose high prestige and services are indispensable at this crisis. The suggestion did not come at all from personal friends, but from the unfriendly quarter which has sought to direct the diplomatic affairs of the country, is thereby indicated not only by its general nihilism and culture, but by his special familiarity with the currents of opinion in Europe, derived from travel and correspondence. The same circumstances which caused him to be placed at the head of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, directed the public mind from all quarters, when it unexpectedly that the office of Secretary of State would be vacated. The appointment of his name was, in truth, the general recognition of the evident suitability of his appointment. It was not the case of the public responding favorably or unfavorably to the suggestion of personal friends, but it was the public itself speaking authoritatively for itself. In these was any value of the suggestion, only heard from a little, narrow, coarse and perverse set of politicians, whose influence is confined to the city limits of Boston."

Our Washington Correspondence.

WASHINGTON, January 4, 1863.

In the midst of the great events of this week of a new year, a little band of so-called Christian ministers in the Capital of the nation have agreed to come together, with their congregations, every night for a week, to pray on given subjects, whose title grasp or meeting excites wonder in mind. One would suppose that such men, in called earnest, evangelical clergymen, at such a wonderful time as our history living in the Capital, would not overlook the greatest event of our age; but I look in vain in the programme of prayers for any allusion to slavery or emancipation. On the first night the subject to be prayed about is that of sin—sin in the abstract, of course—not the sin of slaveholding, or crush of rebellion, but sin, as if we were being a Christian, or to obviate all necessity of alluding to particular sins—the sin of being a sinner. On the second night, our country and its rulers can be prayed for; on the third night, "increased spirituality"; fourth night, "missionaries"; fifth night, "schools, colleges," etc., etc.; sixth night, "violations of the Lord's day"; seventh night, "thanksgivings for all mercies, with prayer." As I have said, there is not a single night when the sin of slavery is to be prayed forgiveness for—not a night in which God can be thanked for emancipation. I look over the names of the clergymen who lead the call for these Union prayer meetings, and I see the names of Bishop Clyde and Sampson, three of the most prominent clergymen here. Gurley is not an open loyalist, has never offended the Washington secessionists, and is an anti-emancipationist. Clyde is the great gun of the rebels in this city. He is an Episcopalian, and refused some time ago, when ordered to do so by his Bishop, to read a prayer of thanksgiving because of Union victories. Sampson is a cold, heartless, selfish time-serving professional, or occasion sympathizer. What men are these to be praying for *anything* at such a time as this? This is one picture—now let me show you another.

While the noble clergymen of Washington are praying over "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" (I should except such noble men as Channing, Stockton, and perhaps I may also write the name of Sunderland), the colored preachers and the colored people of this District are upon their knees thanking God for the Proclamation, and asking him, with heartfelt earnestness, to save the victory to that side which, if it succeeds, will declare justice and freedom to a nation. When Dr. Nichols read the Proclamation of Emancipation at "Camp Contraband," in the city, nobody there had any doubt about the efficiency of the document. The contrabands sung and prayed and shouted for joy. And the next day (yesterday) in giving an account of this meeting, says:

"George Payne, a tall, good-looking contraband, from Loudon County, Va., was called upon. He said he does were living away from his master's place, and he described the cruelty practiced towards her. Many a time had she been compelled to go down to the cabin arms, while he sat in sorrow and tears, and run to attend the child of her tormentor. Her own boy that his master was kind, giving him the use of a horse every Saturday to ride fifteen miles to see his wife, but when he reached there it was generally to tell the heart to see them; the children asked and almost without food. Many and many nights he lost up till twelve o'clock waiting for the boy to come, with the order to get money to keep his family from suffering. He had heard that his wife and children were to be sold by the master, and if he ever met him again he would kill him or get them. He grieved to think of his children. His heart had been made glad by the proclamation was being read, wondering if London was included. Thanks be to God, Virginia is free! *After that night they call Mr. Lincoln for such a glorious proclamation.*"

And once more:

"Denny Smith was then called on, and being a little backward, at the suggestion of 'John de Baptist' a hymn was sung to raise his courage. Mr. Smith then said: 'When a slave we's afraid to speak Mr. Linkin's name. Got whipped. Two of my children was sold south. But I feel full of joy to-night. I have had much Sorrow down to the bottom of my heart when Union soldiers defeated in battle. But I thank the Lord. Knew if he had sent the Union army, he would cause us to triumph. When the army come across at Fredericksburg, I had a little boy and girl, children and ox-team, to cross over. Couldn't get across; lost my steers, had to swim back. Then I got some wood together, made a raft, put a tub on the raft, put three of my little children in; called out to Union scamp out to shoot, and he fetched them across in the tub and paddler. Went back five times, and fetch my family all over, thank the Lord. When the steers came over which army I like the best. I say the army that treats me best.' Made up mind five or six to cum over. Had to leave every thing behind. Thank the Lord for the great I Am who gave me all, would give me more."

That man is a dolt, who, after reading these extracts, doubts whether the slaves of the South understand the meaning of the Proclamation, or whether they care anything about it. But it was the prayers offered of this meeting which went to the hearts of all white persons present—the prayers of thanksgiving for the Proclamation. God, and the President, got all the thanks, and they were about equally distributed between them. If Mr. Lincoln could have heard some of the prayers, he would have got a new idea of the power of gratitude in the heart of an emancipated slave.

I feel certain, from what I have seen within a week, of two or three things: One is, that the slaves thoroughly understand, the most of them at least, what the Emancipation Proclamation means. Another matter I also feel it, that the slaves mean to win their freedom in this war, no matter how it results so far as this government and that of the rebels are concerned. *They* mean to demand their freedom, even if President Lincoln fails in his attempt to maintain it. And finally, the Proclamation has already set eleven free, as it will hereafter free millions.

The Intelligencer of this city comes out in a three column editorial against the Proclamation. It argues that Mr. Lincoln cannot alter the fact that under State laws slavery exists in certain States, that although he may free the persons now held to service by State law, it is merely a matter of force, and the moment he withdraws his military, the moment the slave returns to his former condition. In other words, it holds that no commander can abolish a State institution, though he may maintain the freedom of certain persons held as slaves, formerly. To all this kind of argument the Abolitionist has a ready answer: "I care nothing for your legal arguments. Let Mr. Lincoln win military successes and crush the rebellion, selling the actual slaves free, and I defy any power on earth to resurrect slavery again. It will be the hand of God that will forever put down all this government can only win battles. There is the rub. Of course Mr. Lincoln cannot overthrow slavery if he can't beat the enemy in the field, because slavery, like everything else—

There is not a little anxiety among the leading minds of the Republican party here in reference to the next session of Congress. Dangers loom up in the distance. The ultra-ism Democrats are growing bold. What if we should lose instead of gaining ballots—would not these men who deal in lies and infamy generally grow still bolder? Look at *The World* and *Herald*! They are ready to egg on the mob to a second revolution—the pro-slavery revolution of the North. I am encouraged, however, by the remark of a leading clergyman here. God help us, if these unprincipled Democratic leaders will only dare to carry into practice what is in their hearts, we shall be saved, for they have elected a part of the people, and will utterly fail when they attempt anything rash. The liberal masses will crush them in a day, *when they show their hand!* He is right, I hope. But the government must save itself by success in the field. That is the only sure way to do it. Give us some victories, Mr. Lincoln, if you can.

The news from Tennessee to-day is very gratifying, and there is much anxiety in reference to the result of the series of battles. The loss of the Monitor produces a profound feeling of sorrow, for it was expected that the Iron-clad would reduce Wilmington and Charleston. Perhaps the loss of one of this class of vessels will not postpone the attacks that were speedily to have been made upon some of the rebel seaports.

Dr. Gurley preached a most admirable emancipation sermon this morning in the Senate Chamber, to a crowded audience. ARON.

Philadelphia Correspondence.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 5th, 1863.

The Edict of Freedom, so long expected and so impatiently waited for, has at last come, and yet fills the heart of the people. It is a great document, honorable to its author, creditable to the government, and pregnant with blessings to oppressed humanity, the world over. Its enemies—the enemies of our cause—call it "a measure of war;" they know better, else why do they rave at it? The "Satanic" *Herald* repeats its favorite comparison, calling the document a "Pope's bull against the comet;" but in the very same article, the writer proves that this is more effectative, for he deliberately declares: "We consider this *pronunciamento* unnecessary, unwise, ill-timed, impracticable, outside of the Constitution, and full of mischief." The *Herald* knows, and everybody not blinded by prejudice knows, that this is the deadliest blow that has been aimed at the rebellion since the war began.

What if, in its immediate action, it do not free a single slave? What if, for months to come, we should see no beneficial results from its adoption? On the 4th of July, 1776, our fathers adopted the Declaration of Independence, and congratulated themselves on having become a nation. It was a day of belittling and mutual felicitation. But the visible condition of things—the *situation*, as the phrase now is—underwent no immediate change; at least not for the better. On the 5th of July things stood just as they did on the 4th, except that Burgoyne's army was filling their ears and toey enemies were prophesying evil. "You are only adding to your miseries," said the latter. "When the news of your audacity reaches England, your opponents there will be incensed to the highest pitch, and will increase their warlike preparations with increased vigor." And this prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. When the report of your mad-cap declaration and resolve to fight to the death reached England, the people was kindled to a consuming heat, now energy was imparted to the war, and for awhile it seemed as though the new-born nation was to be crushed in the very hour of its birth. The Declaration of Independence was followed by defeat after defeat. First, on Long Island; then in the capture of New York; then by the retreat with bloody tracks through the snows of New Jersey and across the Delaware; and soon after by the disastrous defeat, the defeat on the Brandywine, and the unfortunate battle of Germantown.

Here was proof, strong as Holy Writ, to some, that the attempt to establish a free National government, on the basis of universal equality, was the wildest fire, and future, if not a crime. "God is against us," said the superstitious. "Let us make peace on the best terms we can," said the sordid and faint-hearted.

But our fathers were fighting for a principle. They were contending for a liberty; not merely for their own independence, but for the great doctrines of Freedom laid down in their immortal programme. Failure in such a contest was impossible. Truth and Justice, the eternal principles of right, and the attributes of God himself were committed to their support. So Hancock and Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and the rest, patiently waited and persistently struggled, confident of success, and at last were gloriously shielded.

But I shall be told that the rebels comfort themselves and support their cause by similar reflections. They affect to regard their case as analogous to that of the Revolution in the fourteen. The analogy is only verbal, and is deceptive; the two cases are without any substantial resemblance. England fought us to maintain and perpetuate her rule over us. The South is doing the same thing for the same purpose, with the additional interest of more firmly establishing and more widely extending slavery. The Colonies, unwilling to bear longer the political yoke, rose to establish and perpetuate the institutions of freedom; the rebellious States of the South, unwilling to bear longer the *restraints*, have conspired to destroy the fabric our fathers reared, and to establish in its stead the eternal reign of slavery. The analogies of the case are entirely against the rebel leaders.

But no one imagine that the conspirators want disunion in order that the two sections may be permanently disunited. They want disunion as a necessary step to a more complete union. Mr. Fernando Wood, and Wm. B. Reed what they are looking forward to in case the South should succeed in establishing its independence, and they will tell you, Such a reconstruction as will insure a homogeneous union with the continuance of slavery, in other words, a union including the border free States, New York and the Great West, and excluding New England. They want disunion as a change of base from which to form new alliances for the subjugation of their system, just as the Abolitionists used to demand "dissolution," not for the disintegration of the country, but as a necessary step to the universal spread of liberty.

A philosophical historian, writing of our country, will say: "The American revolution was complete in 1776, but it still remained to defend it by arms." The future annalist will have to say the cause of this second revolution, substituting the year 1863 for that of 1776. But the Rebellion of the Southern oligarchy is not the ruin of the nation, the President's edict will be to its regeneration. It took five years of bloody war to establish and carry into effect the former; what will be required to put down the latter cannot be known. But there is no one fear that the Proclamation will not be carried into full effect. Revolutions do not go backward. The chicken cannot be returned to the shell. Progressive changes, when crystallized into a law, cannot be reversed. A feeble colony like St. Domingo could hold a race as slaves, but when declared free by law, no power of their masters could retain these slaves, nor could all the available forces of the empire afterwards reinstate them in bondage.

The President's Proclamation is not all that the friends of the cause hoped it would be, but such as it is it will give the *coup de grace* to slavery throughout the country. Taken in connection with what has preceded it, it withdraws from the institution the support of the government. It knocks the the underpinnings from the system. The superstructure must come down. It may stick for a while, held up by lateral attachments and time formed cohesions, but its descent by the law of moral gravitation is certain. Let its friends and apologists stand from under. How much ruin, how much destruction of life and property may be involved in its downfall, the future only can disclose.

If Mr. Lincoln rescinded that the President did not make a clean sweep while he was about it, and at once wipe the whole system out of existence; but since he has sought to attain this end by a different course, let us wait and see what time in matures ripenings. That he should have made the loyal Border States exceptions to the action of his edict, does not disappoint any one, but that Tennessee and certain small sections of rebel dom, not half including especially the State of Tennessee, should be exceptions, is a matter which causes dissatisfaction. But let us remember that while Tennessee and those other sections are made exceptions by the edict, they are not exempted from the effects of all rebel masters wherever found. This act, duly enforced, will give liberty to a majority of the slaves in the Rebel States, including especially the State of Tennessee, in which there is perhaps a larger number of rebel slaveholders than in any other.

It is to be regretted that the ungracious phrase, "military necessity," had to have such a conspicuous place in the Proclamation; but it must be remembered that this was a *legal* necessity. It was demanded as a justification of the President's act. Except on this ground, the President would have had no legal right to issue his edict, except for the liberation of the slaves, than the president of a bank would have to use the money in his vaults to feed the starving poor. He was clothed by his oath of office, and solemn obligations to his country, but the necessity, real or fancied, of preserving the integrity of the nation.

But everybody knows, or will know in due time, that while "military necessity" was the legal pretext, justice and humanity were the actual cause of this sublime and beneficent act. The President issued the edict at the demand of the people, and the people demanded it from their sense of humanity and justice. The slaves would not have formally and in all cases admitted to themselves, but that they were impelled to it by their consciences and sense of right, will not be doubted by any one who will be at the pains duly to inquire into the matter. The President set forth the true facts of the case in the line preference with which he closes his Proclamation: "And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." The two phrases, "act of justice" and "military necessity," in the order in which they stand, tell the whole story. The one stands before God, the other the justification for it in the eyes of men.

The style of the document, though too technical for elegance, is pure and not unbefitting the importance of the subject. Legal zeus was put forth in great vigor in the face of having been driven with the greatest care.

Heaven's best blessings on Abraham Lincoln! May he have grace to endure to the end—rising with the occasion," as new exigencies make their demands upon him.

OBITUARY.

DIED, in North Pitcher, Chenango Co., N. Y., on Sunday, Dec. 28, of consumption, MRS G. FRANCES A. PERRY, only daughter of Mr. Elliot and Mrs. Edwin Ufford, aged 37 years.

Thus has passed away another of the slave's best friends, and one of the most appreciative and interested readers of THE STANDARD. It occurs only to me to say that a few words should be here said, commemorative of her worth. She was a superior person—a thinker, a reader, and progressive in all her intellectual and moral tendencies. Prominent in her etolice library were the writings of such men as Channing, Emerson, Furness, Garrison and Parker, and of such women as Lydia Maria Child and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The *Atlantic Monthly* was also her familiar companion. Except in the considerable judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." The two phrases, "act of justice" and "military necessity," in the order in which they stand, tell the whole story. The one stands before God, the other the justification for it in the eyes of men.

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THE TWENTY-SIXTH NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY SUBSCRIPTION ANNIVERSARY.

In view of the colossal magnitude of the Southern rebellion, on the one hand, and of the correspondingly efficient for its suppression by the American government on the other, the Managers of the NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY SUBSCRIPTION ANNIVERSARY have deemed it expedient to defer their ANNUAL ASSEMBLY to this late period—not knowing what events might occur, in the meantime, to render a modification or suspension of their established plan of action desirable, and wishing to be guided by the highest wisdom in such a momentous crisis.

Reverently recognizing in this awful visitation the chastisement of Almighty God for the nation's long-continued, and fearfully aggravated sin of slaveholding, and trusting if any mercifully and in the total extinction of chattel slavery throughout the land; believing that the Proclamation of President Lincoln, emancipating forever all slaves held in States found in rebellion on the first day of January, 1863, will, if energetically and uncompromisingly enforced, inflict a staggering blow upon that fearfully oppressive system; they, nevertheless, feel that the present condition of affairs in this country, with the expedients of governmental and political organization too unreliable, to justify, for one moment, any abatement of vigilance, activity, zeal, liberality, and determination on the part of those who love well as long and as much as they have hitherto consecrated themselves to the godlike work of immediate and universal emancipation, joyfully "bear the cross and despising the shame." With no personal or ecclesiastical feelings to indulge, no selfish ends to promote, no party or sectarian objects to obtain—animated by the deepest religious sentiment and the purest patriotism—it is not for such to commit their sacred cause to other hands, to be held into inaction even by the moral cheering signs of the times, to regard their special mission as accomplished, or to abandon their organized efforts and efficient instrumentalities which have hitherto been crowned with such glorious results. Their work is by Divine help, the extermination of slavery, root and branch; and so long as one slave remains in his fetters, and they are able to plead his cause, that work will not have been accomplished. They must continue to labor for his unfettering, to live and, hailing the way, and taking upon themselves the brunt of the conflict, until the victory be won, the captives set free, and liberty the birthright and possession of every inhabitant of our land, throughout all its borders.

Grateful, that the Anti-Slavery cause has grown from infantile weakness to manly strength—from universal proscription to respectful public consideration—from an apostolic number of adherents to a multitude that no man can number, and which is constantly increasing in every State, under the shield of State sovereignty, after its subjugation and the withdrawal of the Federal armies. Still, it is manifest that a powerful pro-slavery sentiment exists throughout the North, deadly hostile to every scheme of emancipation, definitely claiming a strong reaction of public sentiment on its side, intent on persecuting and ostracizing all who are obtaining their freedom by flight and the chances of war, and leaving nothing undone to get the control of the government, so as to make the most humiliating concessions to the South, and reconstruct the Union on a permanent slaveholding basis.

Under these perilous circumstances, therefore, there must be no indulgence given to the pleasing illusions of fancy, or to an undue exaltation of mind. The struggle for the abolition of slavery may yet be protracted for years; and, unquestionably, it will be necessarily conducted to the end by all those who are faithful in imparting liberty, North as well as South. We must gird up our loins anew, make a fresh consecration of our means and powers, labor with increasing devotedness, and go forth to discharge from this warfare only with the termination of our mortal life, or the liberation of all in bondage.

The Managers of the NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY SUBSCRIPTION ANNIVERSARY give notice, therefore, that it will be held, as usual, in Boston, the last week in January, 1863; and to that annual gathering they cordially and urgently invite all who abhor treason, love liberty, and are willing to consecrate their means and efforts to

Miscellaneous Department.

THE OLD QUAKER MEETING-HOUSE IN WOODBURY, NEW JERSEY.

There is many a spot that is loved for its beauty,
And many a one for its grand associations;
And some, with those, as a part of their duty,
Where battles were fought for the glory of nations.
But give me a spot of a different feeling,
With all that can endear it, when the passions are still,
Like the one now before me—through sycamore peeping—
The old Quaker Meeting-House on the hill.

The dear little Meeting-House, the loveliest Meeting-House,
The old-fashioned Meeting-House up on the hill.

Come, now is the time for the Friends to assemble,
Let us pass by their gay sheds, their carts on their way,
And mark the calm looks of the aged who tremble,
And the bright looks of those who are younger than they.
Let no one enter the door, whose spoken rule by his will,
Seems fast inviting down no such narrower than still,
For they hear the still voice from they all people up in,
In the old Quaker Meeting-House up on the hill.

The dear little Meeting-House, the loveliest Meeting-House,
The old-fashioned Meeting-House up on the hill.

No loud sounding organ, its pompous notes swelling,
With its thrills upon thrills over trembling heart-strings,
Will break upon the ear, like the soul-melting
Are they not brothers all, one with another?
So loving they seem each to fall of good will.
I love the dear Friends to obey by the dictates
To the old Quaker Meeting-House up on the hill.
The sing little Meeting-House, dear little Meeting-House,
The old Quaker Meeting-House up on the hill.

BENJAMIN BANNEKER, THE NEGRO ASTRONOMER.

In these days, when strong interests embalmed in fierce parties, are rushing, one recalls the French proverb of those who are in a hurry, that they cannot hear God thunder. It does not take much sense to drown the noise of a cannon, but go to the hill a fourth of a mile off, and the noises shall die away at its base, while the music shall be heard. Those who can remove themselves away from and above the plane of party-din can hear God's modulated thunder in the midst of it, uttering ever a "continuous and measured cadence." And such can hear even the great voice of the sepulchre's door of a race, saying, Come forth! This war is utterly inexplicable except as the historic method of delivering the African race in America from slavery, and this nation from the crime and curse inevitably linked therewith in the counsels of God, which are the laws of events. If the friends of freedom in the government do not understand this, it is plain enough that the maintenance of slavery throughout the land understand it. And hence it is that so are witnessing their unremitting efforts to exasperate the prejudices of the vulgar against the negro, and to create degradation and slavery to be his normal condition. They point to his figure as sculptured on ancient monuments, bearing chains, and claim that his enslavement is not an unnecessitated custom; but as well point to the brass collars on our Saxon forefathers' necks to prove their enslavement lawful. Slavery is not the slavery belonged to a patriarchal age is the very reason why it is impracticable in a republican age—in its special gratification in this country must be always covered. But this question is now scarcely noticed. The South, by its first blow against the Union and the Constitution, where most severely forced it was its last and only protection from the spirit of the age, did, like the simple fisherman, uncoil the snake in which the Ahriel had been so long deceived. He is now escaping. Thus far, indeed, he is so much escaped force; for he might be saving our hardcore for us, if we only rubbed up the logs which the genie obeys. But whether we shall do this or not, it is very certain that he is now emerging from the sea and the casket, and into it will descend no more. Henceforth the negro is to take his place in the family of races; and no studies can be more suitable to our times than those which recognize his proper position.

The questions raised by military exigencies have brought before the public the many interesting facts drawn from the history of Africa, and from our own Revolution, showing the heroism of the negro, though we doubt whether they can surpass the stories of Toussaint, Sancho, and others, which have led a high European authority to observe that in this war no individual heroism among the whites has equalled that of the blacks. But the forthcoming astronomical figures concerning the negro will be even more exciting than the military. What are we to expect from the unnoticed figures of Banneker? His name is not alarming in this direction, that I came upon the few facts which relate to Benjamin Bannaker—facts which, though not of a startling character, are scarcely known beyond the district in Maryland where, on the spot where he was born, his unadorned grave receives now and then a visit from some one of his race, or from one who has found out the noiseless a which Jefferson recognized and Condorcet admired.

Benjamin Banneker was born in Baltimore County, near the village of Ellicott's Mills, in the year 1732. There was not a drop of the white man's blood in his veins. His father was born in Africa, and his mother's parents were both natives of Africa. What genius he had, then, must be credited to that race. Benjamin's mother was a remarkable woman, and of a remarkable family. Her name was Morton, before marriage, and a nephew of hers, Greenbury Morton, early gifted with a lively and inventive genius, which made its mark in his neighborhood. Of him it is related that he once came to a certain election precinct in Baltimore County to dispute his vote; for prior to the year 1809, negroes with certain property qualifications voted in Maryland. It was in this year, in which he has her restricted by the right of voting to free whites was passed, that Morton, who had not heard of its passage, came to the polls. When his vote was refused, Morton in a state of excitement took his stand on a door-step, and was immediately surrounded by the crowd, whom he addressed in a strain of passionate and eloquent declamation, which bore all hearts and minds with him. He warned them that the new law was a step backward from the standard which their fathers had raised in the Declaration, and which they had hoped would soon be realized in universal freedom; that that step, unless refrained, would end in bitter and sanguinary revolutions. The crowd was held in breathless attention, and none were found to favor the new law.

This man, we have said, was the nephew of Benjamin's mother. She was a woman of remarkable energy, and after she was seventy years of age was accustomed to run down the hills of her land to the ferry, a distance of three miles, and there ride across with a load of produce to the market on the other side. Her husband was a slave when she married him, but it was a very small part of her life's task to purchase his freedom. Together they soon bought a farm of one hundred acres, which was conveyed by Richard Gist to Robert Bannaky (so the name was then spelt), and Benjamin Bannaky, his son (then five years old), on the tenth of March, 1737, for the consideration of seven thousand pounds of tobacco. The region in which Benjamin was born was almost a wilderness; for in 1737 Baltimore was a place of more importance than Baltimore; and even in 1791 this city consisted only of some twenty poor houses straggling on the hills to the right of Jones's Falls. The residence of the Banneker was ten miles into the wilderness from there.

It was under these unpromising circumstances that little Benjamin grew up, his destiny being apparently nothing more than to work on the farm, beside his poor red ignorant parents. When he was approaching manhood, he went, in the intervals of toil to an obscure and remote country school for, until the cotton-gin made negroes too valuable on the distant side for the Indian side to be allowed anything so serious as education, there were to be found here and there in the Southern frontier a few poor negroes might stake their thirst for learning. At this school Benjamin acquired a knowledge of reading and writing, and advanced to arithmetic as far as "Double Position." Beyond these rudiments he was entirely his own teacher. After leaving school he had to labor constantly for his own support; but he lost nothing of what he had acquired. It is a frequent remark that up to a certain point the negro learns even more rapidly than white children; but the same teaching, but that afterward, in the higher branches, they are slow, and, some maintain, impracticable. Young Bannaker had no books at all, but in the midst of his labor he so improved upon and evolved what he had gained in arithmetic that his intelligence became a matter of observation. He was naturally an acute observer of the natural world, and had so diligently observed the signs of the times in society, that it is very doubtful whether at forty years of age this African had his superior in Maryland.

Perhaps the first wonder amongst his comparatively illiterate neighbors was excited when, about the thirtieth year of his age, Benjamin made a clock.

It is probable that this was the first clock of which every portion was made in America; it is certain that it was as purely his own invention as if none had ever been made before. He had seen a watch, but never a clock, such no article not being within fifty miles of him. The watch was his model. He was a long time at work on the clock—his chief difficulty, as he used often to relate, being to make the hour, minute and second hands correspond in their motion. But at last the work was completed, and raised the admiration for Bannaker to quite a high pitch among his few neighbors.

The making of the clock proved to be of great importance in assisting the young man to fulfil his destiny. It attracted the attention of the Ellicott family, who had just begun a settlement at Ellicott's Mills. They were well-educated men, with much mechanical knowledge, and some of them Quakers. They sought out the ingenious negro, and he could not have fallen into better hands. It was in 1767 that Benjamin received from Mr. George Ellicott Maxwell's "Lunar Tables." Along with these, some astronomical instruments, also, were given him. Mr. Ellicott, prevented from calling Benjamin anything concerning the use of the instruments for some time after they were given, went over to repair this omission one day, but found that the negro had discovered all about them, and was quite capable of the rendsail of instruction. From this time astronomy became the great cheer of Banneker's life, and in its study he had most congenial help from all parts of his neighbors. He was flabbergasted, and lived alone in the forest, and on the farm which he had inherited from his parents. He had still to labor for his living; but he so simplified his wants as to be enabled to devote the greater part of his time to his favorite scientific studies. He slept much during the day, that he might the more devotedly observe at night the heavens; his books whose laws he was forced, consequently, to learn by heart.

And now he began to have a taste of that persecution to which every genius under similar circumstances is subject. He was no longer seen in the field, where formerly his constancy had gained him a reputation for industry, and some who neglected at his calm during the day-time found him asleep; so he began to be spoken of as a lazy fellow, who would come to no good, and whose parents had reared the promise of his youth. There was a time when this so vexed his neighbors against him that we had serious fears of their violence. A certain dam in his handwriting, dated December 18, 1790, states:

"I . . . informed me that —— stole my horse and great coat, and that the said —— intended to murder me when opportunity presented. —— ——— ——— upon a caution to let no one come into my house after dark."

The names were originally written in full; but they were afterward carefully cancelled, as though Bannaker himself could find it best to say no more on record an unauthenticated assertion against an individual, which, if untrue, might prejudice him by the mere fact that it had been said.

Very soon after the possession of the books already mentioned, Bannaker determined to compute an almanac for the year 1791. The necessary data occurred to him of the information he had acquired. To make an almanac was a very different thing then from what it would be now, when there is no demand for accurate tables and rules. Bannaker had no aid whatever from men or tables; and Mr. George Ellicott, who professed to know little of the matter, thus, also, states that he had advanced far in the preparation of the ingenuous necessary for his purpose. Bannaker himself, in his calculations at this time, thus corrects an error in Ferguson's Astronomy:

"It appears to me that the wisest men may at times be in error: for instance, Dr. Ferguson informs us, that when the sun is in 0° 0′ deg. of the first mode at the time of full, the moon will be eclipsed; but I find, that, according to his method of projection, there will be no eclipse. Now all the above calculations, and yet the sun is within 11′ 46″ 11 of the moon's ascending node. But no such account as he supposes pre-cuts the appearance of this eclipse."

Another memorandum makes the following correction:

"Errors first ought to be corrected in my Astronomical Tables are these: 2d vol. Leadbetter, p. 204, when 3 anomaly is 1° 30′; the equation 3′ 39″ 41″ ought to have been 3′ 28′ 21″ 5; consequently 155, the logarithm of his distance from ☉ ought to have been 6 in the second place from the index, instead of 7, that is, from the time that his anomaly is 3° 24′ until it is 3° 0′."

Both Ferguson and Leadbetter would have been amazed, had they been informed that their elaborate works had been corrected by a young negro in the then unheard-of valley of the Potapsco.

The first almanac prepared by Bannaker for publication was for the year 1792. By this time his acquirements had become generally known, and amongst those who were attracted by them was James McHenry, Esq. Mr. McHenry wrote to Goddard and Angell, then the almanac publishers of Baltimore, and procured the publication of this work, which contained, for the type of Mr. McHenry, a brief notice of Bannaker. In their editorial notice Goddard and Angell say, "They feel gratified in the opportunity of presenting to the public through their press what must be considered as an extraordinary effort of genius—a complete and accurate Ephemeris, for the year 1792, calculated by a native son of Africa," etc. And they further say that "they flatter themselves that a philanthropic public, in this enlightened age, will duly appreciate the genius, encouragement and support to this work, not only on account of its intrinsic merits (it having met the approbation of several of the most distinguished astronomers of America, particularly the celebrated Mr Rittenhouse), but from similar motives to those which induced the editors to give their calculations the preference, the ardent desire of drawing modest merit from obscurity, and controverting the long-established illiberal prejudice against the black race."

Bannaker was himself entirely conscious of the bearings of his case upon the position of his people; and though perfectly capable of a behind modesty, he solemnly claimed that he is orks had current respect for the African race. In this spirit he wrote to Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State under Washington, transmitting a manuscript copy of his almanac. The letter is a fervent appeal for the down-trodden negro, and a protest against the injustice and inconsistency of the United States toward that color. Mr. Jefferson's reply is as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, PA., August 30, 1791.

"Sir: I thank you sincerely for your letter of the 19th instant, and for the almanac it contained. Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of these is owing only to the degraded condition of their existence both in Africa and America. I can add with truth that no one wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body and mind to what it ought to be, as fast as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances which cannot be neglected, will admit. I have taken the liberty of sending your almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and Member of the Philanthropic Society, because I considered it a document to which your whole color had a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them.

"I am, with great esteem, sir,
"Your most obedient servt,
"THO. JEFFERSON."

When his first almanac was published, Bannaker was fifty-nine years of age, and had received letters of respect from all the scientific men of the country. The commissioners appointed after the adoption of the Constitution in 1789 to survey the District of Columbia ratified the presence and assistance of Bannaker, and treated him as an equal. They invited him to be present at their public; but he declined, and requested a separate table.

Bannaker continued to calculate and publish almanacs until the year 1802. Besides numerous valuable astronomical and mathematical notes found amongst his papers are observations of passing events, showing that he had the mind of a philosopher. For instance:

"27th Aug. 1797. Standing at my door, I heard the discharge of a gun, and in four or five seconds of time the small shot came rattling about me. Two or two of which struck the house; which plainly demonstrates that the velocity of sound is greater than that of a common ball."

"23d Dec. 1760. About 3 o'clock a.m., I heard a sound and felt a shock like unto heavy thunder. I was then living with my parents on Patapsco River. Therefore conclude it must be a great earthquake in some part of the globe."

In the year 1800, he writes:

"The first great locust year that I can remember was 1749. I was then about seventeen years of age, when thousands of them came creeping up the trees. I imagined they came to destroy the fruit of the earth, and would occasion a famine in the land. I therefore began to destroy them, but soon saw that my labor was in vain. Again, in the year 1766, seventeen years after their first appearance, they made a second. I then, being about thirty-four years of age, was more sensible of the devastation a strong flesh, knowing they were not so pernicious to the fruit as I had imagined. Again, in the year 1783, which was seventeen years later, they made their third appearance to us; and they may be expected again in 1800. The female has a sting in her tail as sharp and hard as a thorn, with which she perforates the branches of trees, and in the holes lays eggs. The branch soon dies and falls. Then the egg, by some occult cause, immerges a great depth into the earth, and there continues for the space of seventeen years, as aforesaid."

The following is worthy of Pliny.

"In the month of January, 1797, on a pleasant day for the season, I observed my honey-bees to be out of their hives, and they seemed to be very busy, excepting one hive. Upon examination, I found all the bees had evacuated this hive, and left not a drop behind them. On the 9th of February ensuing, I killed the neighboring hives of bees, and found a great quantity of honey, considering the season, which I imagine the stronger had taken from the weaker, and the weaker had pursued them to their home, resolved to be benefited by their labor, or die in the attempt."

Mr. Benjamin H. Latrobe, who was a true friend of Bannaker, and collected from various sources all the facts concerning him, wrote in a letter as follows:

"During the whole of his long life he lived respectably and much esteemed by all who became acquainted with him, but more especially by those who could duly appreciate his character through the medium of his acquirements. Although his mode of life was regular and temperate, he was frequently found sitting, never married, cooking his own victuals and washing his own clothes, and scarcely ever being absent from home,—yet there was nothing unamiable in his character; for a gentleman who knew him thus speaks of him: 'I recollect him well. He was a short-looking, pleasant man, with something very noble in his appearance. His mind was evidently much engrossed in his calculations; but he was glad his acquaintance